ForeWord Reviews

BIOGRAPHY

The Judge: William P. Clark: Ronald Reagan's Top Hand
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Paul Kengor
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Longtime political partner and friend of President Ronald Reagan, William P. “The Judge” Clark, often said that one of his goals was to “Let Reagan be Reagan.” He spent more than twenty years doing just that.

Born into a California ranching family with a long tradition of law enforcement, Clark first worked with Reagan in his 1965 gubernatorial campaign. A gifted manager, he went on to be appointed by Reagan to three California courts, including the California Supreme Court, where he paved the way for the re-initiation of the death penalty after a twenty-five year lapse. An intelligent man and quick study, Clark’s failure to graduate from college and the fact that he took the bar exam twice before passing dogged him each time he was appointed to an important post.

Even so, Reagan liked and trusted Clark and his politics, so he brought him to Washington to act as his deputy secretary of state. After an uproar in the press about Clark’s lack of experience, Reagan said to him, “I think we should keep horses tied to a tree out here, in case we need to make a quick getaway.” Clark also served as national security adviser where he became one of the chief architects of Reagan’s anti-Soviet policies. He was secretary of the interior until his resignation in 1985.

Kengor, professor of political science at Grove City College and author of *God and Ronald Reagan* and *Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism*, and Clark’s cousin Doerner, who taught at the University of California, Santa Barbara and Cal State University, have opened an interesting window into the Reagan years. Although the view suffers from its reverential tone, this is the perfect pre-presidential moment to review the record of the man who helped end the Cold War. *The Judge* brings the period and the turmoil into focus.

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